



MITT ROMNEY
GOVERNOR

KERRY HEALEY
LT. GOVERNOR

EDWARD A. FLYNN
SECRETARY

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety
Department of Fire Services

P.O. Box 1025 ~ State Road

Stow, Massachusetts 01775

(978) 567~3100 Fax: (978) 567~3121



STEPHEN D. COAN
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

THOMAS P. LEONARD
DEPUTY STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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Contact: Fire Chief Alfred LeBlanc, (978) 534-7541
Jennifer Mieth, (978) 567-3381

**State Fire Marshal and Leominster Officials Conclude
Chemical Plant Explosion Investigation**

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan, Leominster Mayor Dean J. Mazzarella and Leominster Fire Chief Alfred LeBlanc today announced the cause of the explosion at Polycarbon Industries. The explosion occurred at 4:15 p.m. on March 22 at 28 Elm Hill Avenue in Leominster. One worker was injured in the fire.

Coan said, "The joint investigative team has concluded that an unintentional, violent chemical event was the cause of this explosion." Investigators believe a chemical event took place during the third stage of a process conducted at the chemical plant. "There was no intentional act behind this explosion," he added.

Chief LeBlanc said, "While this is the conclusion we were all expecting, I would like to commend the quick work of the joint investigation team to sift through the heavy debris, pinpoint the area of origin and determine the cause." He added, "I would also like to credit the Leominster firefighters for a superb job under difficult conditions, and acknowledge the assistance of the regional hazardous materials response team and the Department of Environmental Protection."

Mayor Mazzella said, "This was an excellent example of how large numbers of agencies use an incident command structure to work together efficiently and effectively. This truly cooperative working atmosphere is a model for providing homeland security at the state and local levels."

The investigation was jointly conducted by the Leominster Fire Department, the Leominster Police Department, State Police fire investigators, in the Office of the State Fire Marshal and the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Vital assistance was received from the Department of Environmental Protection, State Police Crime Scene Services and the Collision Analysis Reconstruction Section, the regional Hazardous Materials team, the fire protection engineering staff in the Office of the State Fire Marshal and the Department of Fire Services' Incident Support Unit.

